

Cabin Porn – This is Brexit Britain? A Critical Cultural Analysis of Two Anti-Brexit Protest Songs

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This paper stems from a smaller segment of my ongoing Marie Skłodowska-Curie project on the phenomenon of Brexit – the UK’s decision in 2016 to withdraw from the European Union – and its various articulations in Britain’s various popular music discourses and practices. As shown in the extensive survey of British media discourses on Brexit and popular music that I have undertaken and presented elsewhere, Brexit and related political phenomena (such as authoritarian right-wing populism and austerity policies) are arguably linked to a growing politicization of the entire popular music field in the UK. It is against this backdrop that in this paper I focus on a textual and critical cultural analysis of two Brexit-inspired *protest songs* – a category defined here “metaphorically” as expressing an “oppositional stance through aesthetic and/or subcultural politics” (Laing 2012: 154). These are: Momus’s “Cabin Porn” (from *Scobberlotchers*, American Patchwork, 2016) and Farai’s “This is England” (from *Rebirth*, Big Dada, 2018). Informed by an interdisciplinary and eclectic theoretical-methodological framework that draws on prior studies of popular music and politics, this analysis aims to exemplify a strand of Britain’s popular music production with the strong anti-Brexit sentiment, contributing thereby to a larger discussion (academic and otherwise) on contemporary forms of protest music, the political potential and limits of their influence, and their place in the longstanding and rich history of British/Anglophone protest music as well as in the ongoing debates on Brexit, British identity, and the future of Brexit-Britain and the world beyond.

Jelena Gligorijević is a popular music scholar with a strong international academic record and with multiple research interests – from Cavalera’s World Metal projects to queer karaoke. Her primary field of expertise is in issues of identity, power, and politics in Balkan popular music across the former Yugoslav region, notably Serbia, as exemplified by her doctoral dissertation *Contemporary Music Festivals as Micronational Spaces: Articulations of National Identity in Serbia’s Exit and Guča Trumpet Festivals* (2019). Jelena is currently affiliated as a Marie-Curie postdoctoral research fellow with the School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music at the Dublin City University, where she explores various aspects of the Brexit phenomenon in Britain’s popular music discourses and practices.